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DEPARTMENT OF STATE AIRGRAM

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A 364 — NO.

CONFIDENTIAL — HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

RECEIVED

INFO: USCINCSO FOR POLAD, DOD, Amembassies MANAGUA, SAN JOSE, SAN SALVADOR, TEGUCIGALPA

APR 1 10 57 AM 1968

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

DATE: Mar 30, 68

SUBJECT : Weekly Internal Security Report: March 22-28, 1968

REF :

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
APR 3 - 1968

DEPARTMENT OF STATE ARCHIVES
REVIEWED BY ... DATE 7 OCT 1981
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

1. The most notable development of the week was a major shake-up in the top military command on March 28. The biggest switch was the replacement of Minister of Defense Col. Rafael ARRIAGA Bosque by Col. Rolando CHINCHILLA Aguilar. Other important changes included the ouster of Col. Carlos ARANA Osorio as Commander of the Military Brigade in Zacapa and of Col. Manuel Francisco SOSA Avila, as chief of the National Police. There were also a number of other changes involving brigade commanders and others. (See list of incidents and Embassy telegrams for full details.)

2. It is still too early to assess the full impact the changes will have or pinpoint the reasons behind them. One suggested reason for the change was the President's displeasure over the invasion of University property by members of the security forces, resulting in the arrest of 8 students. (See item 4 below) The change could, however, spring from repercussions of the Archbishop kidnap case. It is almost impossible to assess the impact of the transfers. An encouraging sign, however, is that both the ex-Defense Minister and the Chief of Police turned over their positions gracefully, calling for support by their respective subordinates for their new chiefs. (See Guatemala 3952 for the text of Arriaga's statement.) PR Party leaders also came out in full support of the President's action.

3. While the command changes have occupied the public's attention since they were announced, there were other important developments during the week. One such was censure in Congress of the Vice President on March 26. The censure motion was passed unanimously by all present and voting,

Enclosure: List of Incidents

Repeated JEC

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Clearances: DAIT:FHacker; POL-1:JWilson (in draft)

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but the PID, MLN and all but one independent walked out before the vote was taken. The preported reason for the censure was Marroquin's treatment of the kidnap case in his columns in his paper LA HORA. Speaking to the motion on the floor of the Congress prior to the vote, PR Deputy VILLAMAR Contreras noted that the Vice President had gone so far as to intimate that the Army or the Police could have been behind the kidnapping. Villamar found this position of the Vice President "strange". (See Guatemala 3909 for further details on the censure motion.) There is considerable speculation, however, that the Vice President was at least cognizant of the plan to force the President's resignation through the kidnapping of the Archbishop and that this contributed to the impetus behind the censure motion.

4. A third incident which commanded considerable attention and which might be tied to the command reorganization was a raid on the grounds of San Carlos University on March 21 which resulted in the capture of 8 students. All have now been released. Their story is that they were kidnapped by the MANO. It is widely believed, however, that they were in fact taken by the GOG security forces. (See Guatemala 3926 [redacted]

5. COMMENT: The interrelationship between the Archbishop case, the Vice President's censure, the 8 students, and the change in command cannot be established conclusively on the basis of data presently available. [redacted] It does appear, however, that the President has come out of the confusion in a stronger position than when he went in, in the short run at least.

6. Other incidents were relegated to the sidelines but they were fairly numerous. There were 3 presumed kidnappings reported, 3 shootings, and 4 assassinated bodies located throughout the country. There were no major insurgent actions reported during the week.

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Guatemala A- 364
Enclosure

LIST OF INCIDENTS

March 21 - Eight San Carlos University students captured in raid on University grounds. All later reappeared, 6 on March 25 and 2 March 27. Generally considered (and hinted at in press) security forces responsible (GUATEMALA 3926. [redacted] [redacted]

22 - Body of Alfonso JACOME Izales found shot near Ipala, Dept. Chiquimula.

23 - Filberto RUIZ taken from his home in Escuintla by 12 armed men according statement by wife to press. He administrator of Finca Santa Georgina.

24 - Miguel Salvador EQUIZABAL Chacon shot, wounded by unknown men in El Cromo, Dept. El Progreso.

24 - Labor leaders threatened, called Communists and told to leave country by ODEASEC (Organization of Anti-Communist Associations). Labor leaders requested protection from GOG.

25 - Cayetano Raxcon, farmer, shot from ambush, wounded in Nueva Concepcion, Dept. Escuintla.

26 - Office of Public Relations of Army announced that during State of Siege President had named office sole official source of information relative to State of Siege. Office will maintain 24 hour schedule.

26 - Unidentified man killed by grenade explosion, found dead at San Jose Pinula, Dept. Guatemala. Indications are he was brought to spot after explosion.

26 - Salvador SOTO de Leon taken from his Zone 6 house by 6 armed men, one wearing national police helmet. Family told by police authorities they do not have him.

26 - Vice President Clemente MARROQUIN Rojas censured in Congress by unanimous vote of those present. PID, MLN and all but one independent walked out (GUATEMALA 3909).

27 - Chief of bandit gang on South Coast, Jesus LOPEZ Escobar, killed in Nueva Concepcion in gunfight with security forces according press.

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March 27 - Costa Rican Embassy informs GOG that sister of Raul Lorenzana, Lilian Rodriguez Morales de Paul, and her minor child have sought and been granted political asylum.

28 - Lic. Jose GREGORIO Diaz, presidential candidate in 1945 and former Guatemalan ambassador to numerous countries, taken from Zone 9 home by armed men who said they were taking him to first corps headquarters of National Police. Police deny having him.

28 - Shot, tortured body of unidentified man found in river near Palin, Dept. Escuintla.

28 - Tortured body, identified as Alfredo TRINIDAD Maldonado, found in deep gully in Zone 3 of capital.

28 - President ordered change in top military posts. Changes include: Minister of Defense Rafael ARRIAGA Bosque replaced by Rolando CHINCHILLA Aguilar; Commander of Zacapa Brigade Col. Carlos ARANA Osorio replaced by Rafael SAENZ Calderon; Commander of Honor Brigade Arturo GIRON Natareno replaced by Col. Manuel de J. PEREZ; Commander Quezaltenango Brigade Col. David A. CASTRO Lanuza replaced by Col. Arturo GIRON Natareno; Chief National Police Col. Francisco SOSA Avila replaced by Col. Victor Manuel GAMBOA Gramajo (GUATEMALA 3936, 3944, 3953; [redacted]

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